

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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FM AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 471

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

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UNCLAS BORDEAUX 012

BRUSSELS PASS FAA

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: EAIR, FR, UK, US

SUBJ: CIVAIR LOCAL REACTION TO CONCORDE DECISION

1. SUMMARY: GENERAL REACTION IN SOUTHWEST OF FRANCE WHERE AEROSPATIALE, CONCORDE'S PRODUCTION PLANT, IS LOCATED HAS BEEN LARGELY FAVORABLE TO SECRETARY COLEMAN'S FEB 4 DECISION ON CONCORDE. REACTION OF AEROSPATIALE OFFICIALS IN TOULOUSE IS MUCH MORE RESERVED, ESPECIALLY IN TERMS OF THE EFFECTS USG LIMITATIONS WILL HAVE ON CONCORDE'S ASSEMBLY-LINE AND COMMERCIALIZATION. NEVERTHELESS, GENERAL FEELING IS ONE OF RELIEF AND TACIT REALIZATION THAT USG DECISION COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE. END SUMMARY.

2. LOCAL REACTION IN TOULOUSE, WHERE AEROSPATIALE PLANT WHICH CONSTRUCTS CONCORDE IS LOCATED, HAS BEEN LARGELY FAVORABLE TO SECRETARY COLEMAN'S FEB 4 DECISION ON CONCORDE. MOST POSITIVE INITIAL REACTIONS COME FROM GROUPS SUCH AS THE TOULOUSE-BASED "COMMITTEE FOR THE UNCLASSIFIED

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SUPPORT OF CONCORDE." THERE IS SOME CONFIDENCE THAT

TRIAL PERIOD OF SIXTEEN MONTHS WILL CONVINCE THE OPPONENTS OF CONCORDE IN U.S.A. THAT THIS PLANE'S MERITS OUTWEIGH ARGUMENTS, ESPECIALLY ENVIRONMENTAL, AGAINST ITS UTILIZATION. HOWEVER, THERE IS GENERAL UNDERSTANDING THAT CONCORDE STILL FACES SERIOUS OBSTACLES AND THAT MUCH MORE WORK HAS TO BE DONE TO ESTABLISH ITS BONA FIDES IN USA.

3. REACTION FROM RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS AT AEROSPATIALE IN TOULOUSE HAS BEEN MUCH MORE RESERVED. IN TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH BERNARD DUFOUR, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF AEROSPATIALE PRODUCTION AND TESTING COMPLEX IN TOULOUSE, HE TOLD ME THAT ALTHOUGH OVERALL REACTION TO USG DECISION IS FAVORABLE, THE LIMITATIONS PLACED ON CONCORDE POSE SERIOUS PROBLEMS. FIRST, HE CITES THE CHICAGO CONVENTION AND STATES THAT ACCORDING TO INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS ON THE CERTIFICATION OF CIVIL AIRCRAFT BETWEEN FRANCE, UK AND USA, RESTRICTIVE CLAUSES OF THE TYPE IMPOSED ON CONCORDE'S OPERATIONS ARE EXCEPTIONAL. "WE HAVE THE FEELING OF BEING TREATED AS SECOND-CLASS INTERNATIONAL CITIZENS," HE SAID. SECOND, THE RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED, ESPECIALLY THE SIXTEEN-MONTH TRIAL PERIOD LIMITATION, WILL NOT FACILITATE THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF THE PLANE. IT TAKES THREE YEARS TO CONSTRUCT A CONCORDE AND, ACCORDINGLY, ASSEMBLY LINE DECISIONS MUST BE BASED ON PROJECTIONS BEYOND THE 16 MONTH TRIAL PERIOD. DUFOUR SAID WHAT AEROSPATIALE NEEDS IS ENOUGH TIME AND CREDITS TO FIND NEW CUSTOMERS.

COMMENT: DUFOUR'S RATHER NEGATIVE REACTION MUST BE PUT IN PERSPECTIVE, ESPECIALLY SINCE JEAN-CHARLES POGGI, THE SALES DIRECTOR FOR AEROSPATIALE IN PARIS IS QUOTED IN THE PRESS AS SAYING "THE TRIAL PERIOD OF 16 MONTHS WILL BE LONG ENOUGH TO PROVE THAT CONCORDE CAN MAKE REGULAR AND PROFITABLE FLIGHTS." DUFOUR'S INITIAL REACTION AS EXPRESSED ABOVE IS COLORED BY THE IMMEDIATE WORKLOAD PROBLEMS HE, AS THE PLANT MANAGER OF AEROSPATIALE, FACES. HIS GREATEST PROBLEM TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT CONCORDE'S ASSEMBLY LINES CAN BE KEPT IN OPERATION AND WHETHER OR NOT THE LEAD TIMES ARE SUFFICIENT. NEVERTHELESS, I HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT IN TOULOUSE THERE IS A FEELING OF RELIEF AND A TACIT REALIZATION THAT UNCLASSIFIED

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THE USG DECISION COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE.
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